

need more and more first responders, not fewer.

So the COPS program in this bill meets its demise, a successful program. We do not quite know why it is ending. We are grateful to the chairman and ranking member for having it go on this long.

But we do have a chance to resuscitate it. The House has passed the reauthorization of the Justice Department bill. We are awaiting action in the Senate. In that bill we authorized the COPS program to live to see another day. We have bipartisan support from Chairman SENSENBRENNER, Democrats and Republicans joining together to try to make the COPS program come back to life.

I would urge my colleagues to think about whether or not at this time of heightened national security concern, we want the COPS program to end.

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I see the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), and if he would not leave the floor, I just wanted to comment on what he was commenting on, so I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In the report on that Commission, and Mr. DOGGETT spoke to me about it, what you said did not kind of jibe completely with regard to our conversation. But the statement accompanying the conference report says, "Within the amount for the water quality program, the conferees recommend that the Commission increase funding for the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project above the \$2.2 million contained in the budget request." So we did ask for them to go above the request.

Secondly, we say "Studies by the U.S. section of the IBWC conclude that Rio Grande Valley levees are deficient in height, geologically flawed, and structurally unsound. The conferees expect the administration in the upcoming budget cycle to request sufficient funds to address these needs. Also, the conference directs that \$250,000 be made available for the Rio Grande Canal Project." This is an increase over the construction amount.

Secondly, we plan on doing a letter, because the country of Mexico is involved. Texas ought to be involved, but by torching something, it does not always get it done. I think it has to kind of come together.

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOLF. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, the language the gentleman quotes is the same language that I quote. I applaud the committee for adding that in there.

The problem is that the total amount of money for the agency was not changed, and to get any more than \$2.2 million, they will be taking it out of existing projects that they have on the Colorado River. And the head of the agency is saying they need five times as much as the President asked for.

Mr. WOLF. Who did they say that to? Is that in writing somewhere?

Mr. DOGGETT. Yes, I think it is in writing. It is in the cost estimates or in the reports that have already been forwarded up to the State Department. But I do not think they were ever forwarded to the committee.

I applaud the committee concerns about this and the language that they added, and I am glad the gentleman will be submitting further letters and the like, because this is a small part of this budget, but a big problem for our folks. And they get out of this, even if they go from \$2.2 to \$3 million, only about a third of what the agency itself says is needed, not just this year, but each year for the next 10 years.

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Mr. WOLF. Well, we are going to do a letter. I would urge the gentleman to get a meeting to get the commission to come up to your office. We will have a staff person come by. Also get the State of Texas, also do not forget about Mexico, to get them to come by and try to bring it to a head. I think that is a more constructive way than just saying this bill is not very good. I thought we had with this language forced them to address the issue. We will send a letter.

But if this were my congressional district, I would have them up here. I would ask the State Department to come down and walk with you. I would go to Mexico and be on the other side. I would have a letter to President Vicente Fox. I would have a letter to Secretary Rice. So there is a lot that you have to do.

Mr. DOGGETT. If the gentleman will yield, let me just assure him I have done all those things short of walking in Mexico because this only covers the cost of repairing the U.S. side of the levees. It does not concern any repairs to the Mexican side.

Mr. WOLF. What do they do? What does Mexico do?

Mr. DOGGETT. Well, Mexico, I think if they see that we are moving to raise the levees on the American side, they will be caused to take action on the Mexican side. This is simply, the cost that I have talked about is only the U.S. side of the levees. It is not the Mexican side of the levees. That is their responsibility to act on that.

Mr. WOLF. But if it goes on one side does that not impact on the other side?

Mr. DOGGETT. That is why I say, naturally, the kind of budget challenges they face in Mexico, if they say we are raising our side to meet this flood problem, we believe that they will act to raise it on their side also.

Mr. WOLF. Well, I would like to challenge the gentleman to really pull together. I will try to come to the meeting or get some staff people to come. Bring in the Mexican ambassador. Do something rather than just coming down and doing that. But do something. Get the Mexican ambassador to come on in. Have somebody from the State Department. Bring them on up. Go down there. Walk it. Do everything

you possibly can, because you certainly do not want something to happen whereby people die in a flood.

Mr. DOGGETT. I accept that challenge already having done most of that. It has not just been my request, but the request of three of us, four of us, actually, from the Rio Grande Valley to the President and to the State Department, and we have been unable to get any movement from them. And I understand we need their cooperation in order for your committee to move forward. Thank you for your interest.

Mr. WOLF. Well, we will try to help you. We will send a letter, and in the letter that we will send maybe Mr. MOLLOHAN will sign it with me. We will send you a copy of it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member, and I do thank the chairman. This is an interesting mix of a committee, the State, Justice, Commerce and related agencies; and I acknowledge that the amount is up to \$4.9 billion from the request of \$4.7 billion. Let me quickly point out some areas that I wish we had more money, but I am grateful and want to emphasize the value and this is, of course, NOAA that played a pivotal role and could play an even greater role as we begin to see climatic changes and see storm surges create the devastation of the gulf coast.

This is an important agency and the monies included certainly are welcome and arguably, I hope, we will see additional dollars. The \$1.3 billion for international peacekeeping certainly is valuable, and I hope that the emphasis is on peacekeeping. I would hope that some of those dollars could be used in transitioning our military out of Iraq and putting in peacekeeping forces that would combine with our allies over this crisis that we have.

I am grateful that NASA is funded. In times of trouble, I know that we look to agencies like this, but I am grateful for that funding and also for the National Science Foundation and, in particular, the small business.

What I do want to bring to my colleagues' attention are two points. One, I am sorry that we did not include the language that would prohibit the FBI under the PATRIOT Act from accessing library circulation records. And I hope we can fix that. I really do. After the backdrop of the national security letters, we know that the FBI, we have a great deal of respect for them and their homeland security role; but we need the protection of civil liberties as well.

I would also say to my good friend, one of the issues that I have been

studying for a number of years is, if you will, the population of elderly prisoners who are in the Federal prisons. They are nonviolent. They are in there for nonviolent offenses. And we have been working on what we call the Good Time Early Release program that would release individuals over the age of 40 to 45 on good behavior. And I believe that this is an issue that is long overdue. I hope that we can work on authorization, but also appropriations to look at this issue. I ask my colleagues to support the conference.

Mr. GORDON. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that the joint explanatory statement of the Committee of Conference designated \$360,000 under the COPS Methamphetamine Enforcement and Clean-up for the Tennessee Methamphetamine Detection and Remediation Research.

Tennessee Technological University will use this funding to develop mobile equipment that can help law enforcement detect and analyze environmental hazards associated with clandestine meth labs.

Since 1999, the number of meth labs in Tennessee has increased by more than 500 percent. And, more than 1,300 labs were seized last year in Tennessee alone, the most of any state in the Southeast.

We have all read the news stories about illegal homemade labs being set up inside houses, apartments, and even in the trunks of cars. Too often you hear about one of these labs exploding, injuring the meth cooks, as well as children inside the home, or even innocent bystanders. These volatile labs pose a threat to the entire community. Tennessee Tech University will collaborate with the law enforcement community to address this critical problem.

Once again, I am very grateful to the conferees for providing this important funding for Tennessee Tech University.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this bill to fund the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, as well as NASA and the National Science Foundation.

In crafting this legislation, our appropriators faced the difficult task of adequately funding many national priorities. On balance, they did a remarkable job and have produced a bill worthy of our support.

This bill increases funding for many important Justice Department programs and included a 9 percent increase for the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a 6 percent increase for both the U.S. Marshals Service and the Drug Enforcement Agency.

For sure, there are programs that we would all like to see funded at higher levels. I am particularly disappointed to see reduced funding for local law enforcement, Community Oriented Policing Services and juvenile justice programs; however, I am pleased that appropriators did not accept the Administration's request to lump all of these programs into one broad Justice Assistance line. I also applaud the conference committee for increasing funds for Byrne grants and the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, both of which I have long supported.

This is the first year that NASA has been funded in this legislation, which provided \$16.5 billion—or a 2 percent increase—for NASA. I appreciate the committee's support of NASA's

efforts to develop a crew exploration vehicle that will eventually replace the Space Shuttle. With Johnson Space Center in our community, we are certainly grateful that the committee rejected the Administration's efforts to cut funding for NASA's Aeronautics Research program.

While the bill provides a slight decrease in funding for the Commerce Department, I am pleased to see significant funding increases for the Economic Development Administration and NOAA, as compared to House-passed funding levels.

One program of particular interest to me and our community in Houston is NOAA's Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection Program. This program exists to protect important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, or historical values and are threatened by development or conversion.

In Houston, we are involved in an effort to preserve the Buffalo Bayou, which is the historic waterway on which the Allen Brothers founded Houston in 1836. NOAA's Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection Program has allowed us to partner with the Trust for Public Land to conserve critical tracts of land along the Buffalo Bayou in order to further our conservation efforts.

For the past two years, Congress has supported our land acquisition funding requests to help revitalize the Buffalo Bayou in a manner that balances the need to conserve the Bayou's wetlands and waterways with the recreational and business development needed to transform the Buffalo Bayou into an active and vibrant urban waterfront center.

To date, congressionally-appropriated funds have played a significant role in the development of Buffalo Bend Nature Park, which was recently dedicated and has provided residents of my district with increased greenspace and recreational opportunities.

In this bill, Congress appropriated \$750,000 for the acquisition of two tracts of land, funding that will further the goals of the Buffalo Bayou master plan. Land along the Buffalo Bayou will be purchased to expand Hidalgo Park, which sits in a historically Hispanic community that has traditionally lacked park land. Through this acquisition, Hidalgo Park will be linked to Buffalo Bend Nature Park, enhancing residents' recreational and environmental experience along the bayou.

The funding will also allow the City of Houston to purchase land along Brays Bayou, beginning at the confluence of Brays Bayou and Buffalo Bayou and stretching to Mason Park, less than a mile away. This area is a prime location for a greenbelt park, the development of which would further the City's plan for parks connected by and along the city's bayous.

I would like to thank appropriators in both the House and the Senate for recognizing the value of these projects and positive impact they will make on the quality of life for my constituents. With that, Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. DELAY. Madam Speaker, the Science-State-Justice-Commerce conference report is a fiscally responsible, disciplined package that meets our Nation's needs while staying within our Nation's means.

And we should be particularly happy that conference negotiators have once again wisely chosen to fully fund NASA's efforts to implement President Bush's vision for space exploration.

The history of our space program has shown that money spent by our taxpayers on NASA is an investment in the technologies that drive not only our exploration of the unknown, but our economy here on Earth.

Since its earliest days, NASA has blazed the trails of rocketry, satellite technology, aerospace engineering, telecommunications, and even produced health care miracles from the MRI to the portable x-ray machine.

The earthbound application of these spacebased innovations has transformed the way we live our lives, do our jobs, and communicate with each other and the rest of the world.

President Bush's vision, already being implemented by new NASA Administrator Mike Griffin and his excellent staff, will rededicate our space program to its original, exploratory mission.

Today's bill provides more than \$16 billion for our space program.

It fully funds the ongoing work of the still vital and necessary space shuttle program and the other first-stage components of the president's vision for space at more than \$3.1 billion.

And with this funding—a mere 1.5 percent increase from last year—we have also provided the NASA Administrator the flexibility he needs to manage his agency's ever-shifting needs and challenges.

Fully funding NASA means fully trusting the courage and brilliance of NASA's people, from astronauts to engineers to support staff, all who are focused on completing the first stage of work in the president's vision: returning the shuttle to flight, completing the International Space Station, developing the next generation space vehicle, and advancing the other aspects of NASA's critical mission.

I have that trust, and this conference report shows that the American people do, too.

I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, although I support the Science-State-Commerce-Justice Appropriations conference report, I rise today to call attention to the need for more funding for our coasts and oceans.

When, together with Representatives WELDON and FARR and former Congressman Jim Greenwood, I co-founded the Bipartisan House Oceans Caucus in 1999 in order to inform my colleagues about the oceans, we faced major policy challenges. Americans were faced with declining fish stocks, beach closures due to poor water quality, and laws that were inadequate to protect America's oceans. My constituents were asking why.

In 2000, Congress finally asked why also. The Oceans Act of 2000 called for a National Commission on Ocean Policy and charged the Commissioners with conducting a nationwide fact-finding mission on the state of our oceans.

The goal was to develop policy recommendations that would lead to a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy. The independent Pew Oceans Commission underwent a similar process, touring the country to listen to testimony from scientists, stakeholders, and others to identify the root problems threatening our nations' oceans.

The products of these two commissions are nothing short of remarkable. Two comprehensive guides, based on the knowledge of our nation's experts, came to many comparable conclusions.

Specifically, the two reports call on Congress to increase our investment in the study, management, and protection of our oceans. Relative to their size and economic value, funding for ocean research and management pales in comparison for other natural resource programs. The federal government spends over \$10 billion to manage public lands and more than \$16 billion on space exploration.

In 2001, the Pew Commission recommended a doubling of the NOAA budget to \$6 billion over 5 years. Similarly, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy recommended an additional \$3.9 billion in new spending on top of what we already allocate to NOAA. Yet, the legislation we are debating today sets NOAA's budget for Fiscal Year 2006 at only \$3.95 billion. This level is only a modest increase of \$28 million over funding levels enacted in FY '05 (\$3.92 billion total).

Now I have a great deal of respect for the Chairman, Mr. WOLF, and the Ranking Member, Mr. MOLLOHAN, and I know that they did the best they could with this bill under the tight budget allocations that they were forced to deal with. In this conference report there are modest increases to fishery and coastal management programs but these are unfortunately accompanied by cuts to other vital programs such as marine sanctuaries, the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, and the National Sea Grant Program.

Our economy, security, and health all hinge on healthy ocean ecosystems. I look forward to working with the Chairman and the Ranking Member on implementing the recommendations of the Ocean Commissions and investing appropriately in our coasts and oceans in the FY 2007 budget.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to applaud the passage of the FY 2006 Science-State-Justice-Commerce Appropriations Bill, which includes funding for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties Joint Gang Suppression and Prevention Initiative in my district. I salute my colleague Mr. WOLF and thank him for his leadership on confronting the issue of gang violence in the Washington metropolitan area.

The federal funding approved today builds on the ongoing work of the Joint County Gang Prevention Task Force, which was established by the county executives of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in February 2004. This funding will allow for the establishment of centralized anti-gang units within each county's police force, enabling them to pursue a zero-tolerance policy for gang violence. A cross jurisdictional community-based program, serving youth and families, would be created to provide gang prevention education, mentoring, and outreach services. Critical after-school programs would be funded for areas where there is a high incidence of gang activity.

Law enforcement research shows that there are approximately 3,600 gang members in Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia and that there are nine major active gangs and more than 100 additional crews region wide. Montgomery County Police estimate that there are 20 to 22 active gangs with approximately 540 to 560 active members and associates. Prince George's County Police estimate that there are 50 crews or gangs in that county with a total of over 400 members. Officials in Prince George's County note a recent increase in the number of Latino gangs and

report that the criminal activity of these gangs has expanded to sophisticated car theft rings and prostitution.

This funding will help the people of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties fight the growing problem of gang violence and teach young people that gang life is not the road to success, but rather the path to prison. It is important that we provide our law enforcement officials, our teachers, and our community leaders with the support they need as they work to keep our youth safe from gangs and teach them the long term consequences of joining a gang.

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken tomorrow.

VETERANS HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3665) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide adaptive housing assistance to disabled veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by a family member and to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3665

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act of 2005”.

(b) *TABLE OF CONTENTS.*—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Sec. 101. Adaptive housing assistance for disabled veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by family member.

Sec. 102. Permanent authority to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans.

Sec. 103. Extension of eligibility for direct loans for Native American veterans to a veteran who is the spouse of a Native American.

Sec. 104. Terminology amendments to revise references to certain veterans in provisions relating to eligibility for compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation.

TITLE II—EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Sec. 201. Extension of operation of the President's National Hire Veterans Committee.

Sec. 202. Additional duty for the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training to raise awareness of skills of veterans and of the benefits of hiring veterans.

Sec. 203. Modifications to the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training.

TITLE III—HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

Sec. 301. Reauthorization of appropriations for Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.

TITLE IV—TECHNICAL, CLARIFYING, AND CLERICAL AMENDMENTS

Sec. 401. Technical and clarifying amendments to new traumatic injury protection coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

Sec. 402. Technical and clerical amendments.

TITLE I—HOUSING ASSISTANCE

SEC. 101. ADAPTIVE HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR DISABLED VETERANS RESIDING TEMPORARILY IN HOUSING OWNED BY FAMILY MEMBER.

(a) *ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED.*—Chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2102 the following new section:

“§2102A. Assistance for veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by family member

“(a) In the case of a disabled veteran who is described in subsection (a)(2) or (b)(2) of section 2101 of this title and who is residing, but does not intend to permanently reside, in a residence owned by a member of such veteran's family, the Secretary may assist the veteran in acquiring such adaptations to such residence as are determined by the Secretary to be reasonably necessary because of the veteran's disability.

“(b) The assistance authorized under subsection (a) may not exceed—

“(1) \$10,000, in the case of a veteran described in section 2101(a)(2) of this title; or

“(2) \$2,000, in the case of a veteran described in section 2101(b)(2) of this title.

“(c) The assistance authorized by subsection (a) shall be limited in the case of any veteran to one residence.

“(d) Assistance under this section shall be provided in accordance with such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe.

“(e) No assistance may be provided under this section after the end of the five-year period that begins on the date of the enactment of the Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act of 2005.”.

(b) *LIMITATIONS ON ADAPTIVE HOUSING ASSISTANCE.*—Section 2102 of such title is amended—

(1) in the matter in subsection (a) preceding paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “shall be limited in the case of any veteran to one housing unit, and necessary land therefor, and”; and

(B) by striking “veteran but shall not exceed \$50,000 in any one case—” and inserting “veteran—”; and